



# The Nyadire Connection

Founded in 2006 and based in Pittsburgh, TNC is a faith-based, non-profit, all-volunteer organization that seeks to support and sustain the United Methodist Mission in Nyadire, Zimbabwe

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[www.nyadire.org](http://www.nyadire.org)

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## TNC Provides “Hope” Every Day For Our Friends In Nyadire

Sandy McKnight, TNC’s Director-Administration and Programs, has been on mission trips to Zimbabwe six times. Each time she returns home, she brings with her the same message from our friends in Nyadire.

“After ‘thank you, thank you,’ the words they say most often are that we provide **hope** to the people of Zimbabwe and those we interact with,” says Sandy, who spent two weeks there in January. “Thanks to the support of our many donors, TNC provides that hope in a variety of tangible ways.”

Shown in this photo are some of the TNC folks who traveled to Nyadire in January, from left to right: Leah Swineford, Deborah Swineford, Sandy, and Scott Sanford.



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## Bricks For Life: Help TNC Complete The Final Clinic In 2023

Ten years ago, TNC began a brick-by-brick journey to refurbish six rural medical clinics in Zimbabwe. At the time, we had no idea how – or if – we could raise the necessary funding, about \$1.8 million. But we were driven by the faith that these clinics would improve the standard of health care for tens of thousands of residents, especially mothers-to-be who would walk miles to have their babies there.

**Nurse Patience**, who worked in the **Chikwizo** clinic, captured this essence when she said the clinics “mean life” to her and many others. So we began that journey, with the faith that God would provide.

Today, thanks to the passion and support of our donors, we’re pleased to say that God has provided and that we are about to complete our clinics journey.

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## TNC Provides “Hope” Every Day...

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Sandy says these tangible expressions of hope include:

- We have seven network churches, and those congregations fervently pray for the success of our programs and for the people in Zimbabwe. “They covet our prayers, and appreciate them.”
- Hope is when a child without parents is brought to Nyadire’s **Home of Hope Orphanage**, which operates with significant support from TNC.
- When a 16-year-old deaf child can attend school and learn sign language through TNC’s **Hearing Innovation** program, that’s hope.
- Through our **Clinics Refurbishment** program, we provide hope to pregnant women who have to walk many miles to their local clinic. “These women no longer have to wonder if they will be turned away or if there will be a clean bed for them.”
- Hope is a bar of soap and a feminine hygiene kit provided to a fifth-grade girl who otherwise would be missing school. “Before our **Girl Empowerment Pad** program, the majority of girls had to miss one week of school per month, making it difficult to keep up with their male peers.”
- We provide hope through **Eyeglasses** clinics, conducted by local residents who have been trained and know how to provide basic eye exams, and distribute glasses collected by TNC. “I talked to several people this trip who have had headaches due to vision issues, but now they can see to sew, to read, to learn, or to do artwork as a vocation.”

“To all of our donors and supporters, thank you for providing hope to our friends in Nyadire,” Sandy says.

## Bricks For Life: Help TNC Complete...

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Five clinics have been refurbished – on-time and on-budget – and we have started on the sixth and final one, at **Chindenga**. To complete this clinic by year-end, we need to raise

\$250,000, and we’re now beginning our campaign to meet that objective. Members of the TNC leadership team have made personal donations toward the clinics, and we ask that you prayerfully consider joining us, so that we can complete Chindenga this year, to provide “life” and improved health care for its patients. We thank you for sharing your blessings over the past 10 years and invite you to help us complete this journey. To make a tax-deductible donation, you may send a check to: The Nyadire Connection c/o Christ United Methodist Church, 44 Highland Road, Bethel Park, PA 15012. Please put “clinics” in the memo line.



## Hearing Innovation Offers Students “Identity and Voice”



During the January mission trip, **Deborah Swineford** and her daughter, **Leah**, had an opportunity to teach and visit with the students who benefit from TNC’s **Hearing Innovation** program.

“It was good to be in the classroom with the children again and teach a few lessons,” says Deborah, TNC’s program leader. “I enjoyed sharing the experience with Leah (photo at left), who taught Bible lessons each afternoon. I also gave each learner a book titled, “What is a Friend?” written and donated by a friend of mine. And I had the opportunity to preach at the revival service.”

As she seeks additional funding and support for the HI program, Deborah is reaching out to TNC’s network churches. In February, she shared the story at **Baldwin Community UMC**, which decided to use TNC’s Lenten calendar as a bulletin insert. Deborah says Baldwin’s Senior Pastor **Rev. Pam Gardner** encouraged church members to consider supporting TNC and the 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. The opportunity to receive an education gives students an identity and voice, teaches self-reliance, provides meaningful purpose, and, most importantly, encourages friendship, values, and goals. TNC’s HI Program provides these children with the opportunity to receive academic and vocational training and the privilege to attend school. There is a fee to attend school and uniforms are mandatory along with boarding fees, because these students travel from a large distance to attend this specialized program. For more information on how to support the education of these students, please contact Deborah at [dsdla7@gmail.com](mailto:dsdla7@gmail.com).



## TNC Leadership Profile: Natalie Geer

**Editor's Note:** This is another in a series of profiles about TNC's Leadership Team, highlighting their roles and why they are involved in TNC.

**TNC Role:** Leader of the Faith Geer Memorial Eyeglasses Program. (Natalie's mother, Faith, laid the foundation for the program, before passing away in 2019. The photo at right shows Natalie, left, with her mom, along with Savie and Greater from Nyadire. The bottom photo shows Natalie, right, with **Jessi Mazzoni** when they participated in the Pittsburgh Polar Bear Plunge to raise money for TNC's **Clinics Refurbishment** program.)



**What is your profession and how has that helped in your TNC role:** I initially attended Nyadire as a

student, which I feel we all are on our first few trips to Zimbabwe! I am now a teacher, so as either a student, teacher or human, I feel we are always learning and growing. This has helped me greatly with the Eyeglasses program, as I only really knew about my own vision difficulties. I wear contacts daily, and would engage with the world very differently if I did not have glasses.

**How and why did you get involved with TNC:** I got involved with TNC through my mom, Faith Geer. We took a trip when I was 16. I went back again when I was 20 and again when I was 21. On these trips, I was able to experience Zimbabwe through my own eyes, but also with my mom. On the trip in 2015, we had the opportunity to be trained for the Eyeglasses program, so that we could complete a clinic while we were in Zimbabwe. At first, Zimbabwe seemed like a neat location to travel, but as I went back and built relationships, it is still about the location, but also the history, the relationships, the general understanding, and feelings of grace while on the mission, but also while completing the work.



**Why do you think TNC has been so successful?**

TNC has been successful because of the dedicated and honest people in Zimbabwe and the U.S. This relationship has a history that sets precedent to help solve problems together. As individuals learn about the programs and the mission, they hear stories too. The stories and strong relationships are what help TNC to be successful.

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**How many times have you been to Nyadire?**

Three.

**What do you like best about TNC:** TNC is a supportive group that is willing to find answers. There are intricate connections from the various hierarchies on both the Zimbabwe and U.S. side, and throughout all of the interconnections, there are genuine, caring and honest people working to do what's best for the people on the mission and in Zimbabwe.

**How has your involvement with TNC helped you to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ:** TNC helps me feel part of a group in this journey. There are great joys and moments when at the mission or in Zimbabwe, but the continued connection with TNC reminds me that it's a year-round commitment. TNC also shows the various ways of demonstrating this involvement and commitment. Everyone displays and shows the connection differently, so seeing all of the gifts come together on a team, or even just a meeting, is glorious to be a part of.

**What Bible verse(s) inspired you to become involved in TNC:**

I find myself singing lots of songs while there, such as: "Here I am to Worship," "How great is our God" and "Hakuna Wakaita sa Jesu" – which is now in the green hymnal! There are/were signs that I never knew to look for until I learned that Zimbabwe was a real possibility.

"Amazing Grace" is another song that will sneak into my head on a personal level, and it's a gentle reminder that there are powers beyond ourselves and it's best to be in a community together – in the states, or around the world. Our world is as big as we let it be/become.

**What's your message to anyone who's considering getting involved in TNC or making a trip to Nyadire:**

All are welcome! Come and see what it's like. It's a learning opportunity that will impact you in ways that you never knew could/would change. It's a great way to get involved with the global community on a local level.



## Girl Empowerment Pad Summit Generates Enthusiasm, Ideas

On the January Volunteer-In-Mission trip, team members **Sandy McKnight**, **Deborah Swineford** and **Leah Swineford** attended a much-anticipated summit for the **Girl Empowerment Pad** program. The meeting brought together teachers who implement the program in the rural schools and at Nyadire Primary, as well as representatives of the **Home Of Hope Orphanage** who work with of-age girls at the home. **Hannah Mafunda**, the Health Coordinator of the Eastern Episcopal Area of Zimbabwe, attended the meeting, as well as **Knowledge Murisa**, a businesswoman/importer from Harare and her husband, **Admire**.



Sandy said the teachers shared that, prior to the start of the GEP program, 75-80% of their female students would miss school monthly due to their menstrual cycles. Now, all of these girls remain in school. Equally important, they said that the girls' self-esteem has improve as they gain knowledge about their reproductive health and ways to manage it.

The "Growing Up In School" booklets about puberty provide great talking points to review with the students and encourage open discussions. The girls can use provided fabric to make their own menstrual pad kits, which also include soap, a plastic bag for soiled pads and a fabric bag to privately store kit items.

The women networked and discussed the evolution of the program. Initially, the girl empowerment pad kits were sewn and assembled in the U.S. and shipped via container to Nyadire for distribution. The focus has shifted to purchasing as much of the supplies as possible in Zimbabwe. Girls are taught to sew their own pads and it is hoped that the program might expand to teaching the girls, and possibly women, how to sew other items.

The women were grateful for the chance to network and share ideas, and enthusiasm for the program remains strong.



TNC's **Bonnie Lawson**, left, shared the story of our **Girl Empowerment Pad** program at a recent meeting of the Pittsburgh South Chapter of Inspired Women.

# Nyadire Primary School Cooking With Gas, Thanks To TNC/EWB

The Nyadire Primary School is now cooking with gas, thanks to TNC's **Drew Harvey** and students from the **Carnegie Mellon University** chapter of **Engineers Without Borders**.

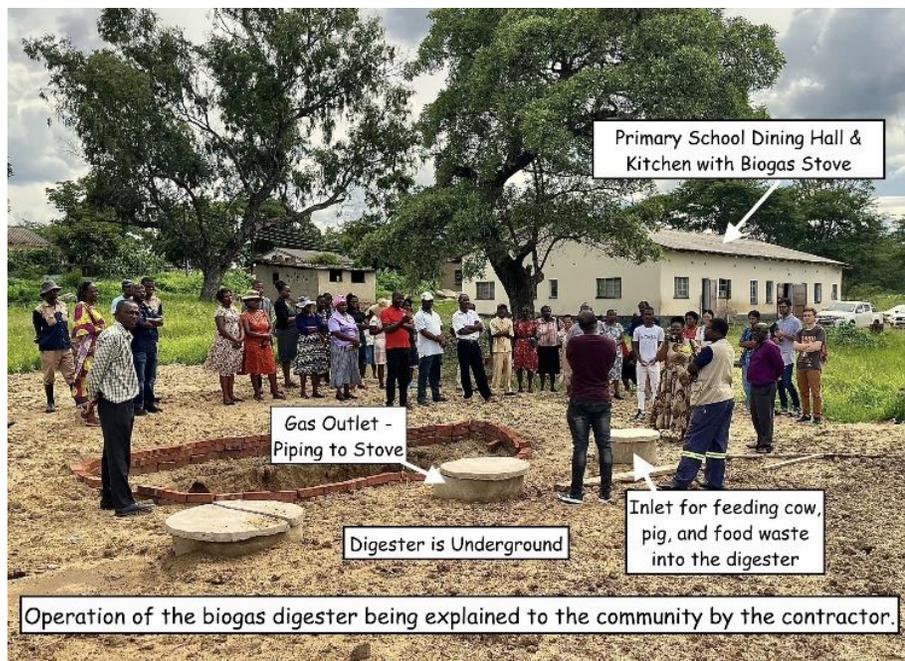
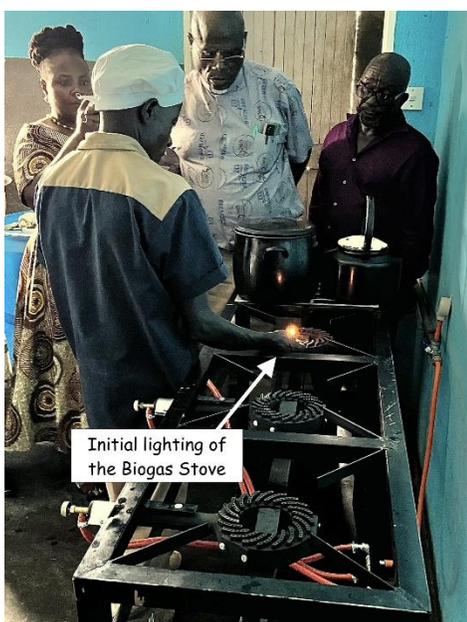
EWB is an international organization where professional engineers volunteer to resolve challenging technical problems. CMU has a student chapter of EWB that began working with TNC in 2013. The most recent project has been to develop a way to replace firewood as the method for cooking meals at the school. The solution developed is a Biogas Digester which is fed with cow/pig/food waste, which decomposes to produce biogas piped to a stove in the dining hall.



Four EWB students visited Nyadire in January with Drew, TNC's EWB program leader, to inspect the installation and turn the unit over to the school for operation. Nyadire must still work out many operational plans, but the burners are now cooking meals!

"This digester is a Pilot Cell with the objective of demonstrating performance and the potential for additional applications," Drew says. "The EWB students plan to return to Nyadire next year to review the operation and sustainability of the biogas digester."

During the trip, the students talked to several Nyadire departments and individuals asking for suggestions for future projects. The students are now working through the options and will eventually review and agree with Nyadire on what problem will be addressed next.



## More Photos from January Mission Trip



## Former Home of Hope Student Returns For Visit Of Thanks



**Kudakwashe Mbozvi**, right, grew up at the Home of Hope. He then attended **Nyadire Teachers College** and has become a primary school teacher.

In gratitude, he returned to Nyadire recently to celebrate the love, support, and education he received by hosting a Christmas celebration and thank you for the orphanage, the pastors, and others.

## Program Highlights From TNC's February meeting

Each month, TNC leaders gather by Zoom to review programs and discuss future plans. Below are highlights from our recent meeting:

- Eyeglasses: The team of Zimbabwe residents, right, is now actively conducting clinics and has served 350 patients so far. Four clinics were conducted in December with one at **Nyadire Hospital** and one each at rural health clinics in **Mashambanhaka, Dindi** and **Chindenga**. The team is well trained to conduct the clinics independently and TNC keeps the inventory stocked with eyeglasses.
- Agriculture: As leader of TNC's newest program, **Scott Sanford** visited Nyadire in January. Scott has extensive experience in agricultural production, including nearly 20 years of working in the dairy equipment business. During the trip, Scott met with **Emmanuel Chiimba**, director of the **Home of Hope Orphanage**, to discuss several agricultural initiatives at the home, including a chicken run, goat enterprise, piggery expansion, fish pond, tractor/field equipment and proposed drip irrigation for expanded crops. The HOH has about eight hectares (20 acres) of maize planted along with ground nuts and sugar beans. All crops are planted, fertilized, weeded and harvested by hand.
- Girl Empowerment Pad: See page 6.
- Rural Health Clinic Rebuilds: See page 1.
- Hospital Support: TNC leaders met by Zoom recently with **Kathleen Griffith** of the **United Methodist Church's General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM)**. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways in which TNC, GBGM, the **Zim Episcopal Area Health Board** and Nyadire can best work together to optimize Nyadire Hospital operations, and cover repairs and operating costs. Outstanding needs at the hospital include battery replacements for the large roof-top solar panel system, possible addition to the small solar panel system to optimize operation of the related borehole (a new pump was purchased for the borehole), vehicle repairs, and repairs to the X-Ray machine, autoclave and generator. Follow-up to these discussions is ongoing.
- Engineers Without Borders/CMU: See page 7.
- Hearing Innovation: See page 3.



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## Program Highlights From TNC's February meeting...

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- Volunteer-in-Mission trips: See highlights of the January trip throughout the newsletter, including photos on page 8. Please contact **Molly Michael** at [mollyalice.michael@gmail.com](mailto:mollyalice.michael@gmail.com) if you're interested in joining a future trip.
- Sister Rut Scholarships: The Scholarship Committee met via Zoom in February to discuss financial needs and cost projections. TNC's monthly minutes, posted at [www.nyadire.org](http://www.nyadire.org) include a complete list of scholarship students and their areas of study.



- Home of Hope: Congratulations to **Precious Muripo**, left, who recently completed Prison Officer and Corrections Training in Zimbabwe. She was one of 187 females to complete the training, out of 782 participants. Precious grew up at the **Home of Hope** and "has always had a strong sense of purpose, a deep faith, and an appreciation of all who have supported her along her journey," said **Mary Beth Zollars**, TNC's program leader ... **Nancy Kapfunde**, the mother emeritus of the **Home of Hope**, has passed away. TNC sends our condolences to the Kapfunde family, and we will keep them in our prayers ... Currently, the HOH has 24 students in various grades ... From project sales, we were able to buy a new pair of shoes for each child ... The staff increased with one new member, **Lindarose Chibinge**. She has volunteered for the past two years as a social worker

and has now formally joined the staff, after the Social Service Department made it mandatory that each operating home has a social worker on staff ... The preschool at **Dutilh UMC** will hold its annual Hop-A-Thon (a.k.a., Hop for Hope) this spring, with proceeds going toward school books for the HOH.

- Home of Hope Outreach: There are now 20 schools in the **HOHO** program ... Lindarose, the social worker at the HOH, is assisting **Emmanuel Chiimba** with updates from the schools. She is currently going to each school to check on each student, take photos, get reports on last year's O-level exams, and screen students for O-level exams for 2023.

## If You Have Newsletter Story/Photo Ideas...

In our newsletter, TNC strives to highlight a variety of our programs, and the efforts of our network churches and other supporters. If you have story/photo ideas that you would like us to consider for publication, please submit them to **Tim Wesley**, at [timwesley61@zoominternet.net](mailto:timwesley61@zoominternet.net)